

Friday, May 26, 2006

May 23rd Board Meeting Highlights Two Aviation Briefs

Flight Crew, Air Traffic Control Cited in Crash of Air Ambulance Near San Diego



The Safety Board determined that a combination of flight crew and air traffic control deficiencies led to the 2004 crash of an air ambulance near San Diego, California.

On October 24, 2004, a Learjet 35A, operated by Med Flight Air Ambulance, crashed into mountainous terrain shortly after takeoff from Brown Field Municipal Airport, near San Diego. The captain, the copilot, and three medical crewmembers were killed. The airplane was destroyed.

The probable cause of the accident was the flight crew's failure to maintain terrain clearance during a visual flight rules departure, which resulted in controlled flight into terrain, and the air traffic controller's issuance of a clearance that transferred the responsibility for terrain clearance from the flight crew to the controller. Additionally, the controller's failure to provide terrain clearance instructions to the flight crew and failure to advise the flight crew of the minimum safe altitude warning alerts were causal to the accident.

Helendale Airplane Crash Attributed to Loss of Control



The Safety Board found that a December 23, 2003, Learjet accident near Helendale, California, probably occurred due to the loss of airplane control for undetermined reasons.

A Learjet 24B, N600XJ, registered to Pavair, Inc., Santa Monica, California, had departed San Bernardino County Airport, Chino, California, destined for Friedman Memorial Airport, Hailey, Idaho. Twelve minutes after the flight departed, the crew requested to return to the San Bernardino airport. The first officer informed the air

traffic controller that he did not need to declare an emergency. However, less than 2 minutes later, the airplane was descending through 23,000 feet at a rate of 10,000 feet per minute and the first officer declared an emergency. No further transmission was received from the airplane before it crashed near Helendale. The pilot and first officer were killed and the airplane was destroyed.

Acting Chairman Rosenker Testifies Before Senate on Safety Board Reauthorization

In testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Aviation on May 24, Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker discussed the Board's reauthorization request.

He told the Senate that the Board enjoys a well-earned reputation as the most effective and authoritative independent safety body in the world: "The men and women who make up the NTSB are very simply the 'best in the business.'"

Rosenker noted that since the Board was last reauthorized, it has adopted 49 reports at 41 Board Meetings, held 6 public hearings, and investigated more than 4,500 aviation accidents and hundreds of surface accidents. During this time, it has published more than 5,000 aviation accident briefs, 12 major aviation accident reports, 19 highway reports, 31 railroad reports, 10 marine reports, 5 pipeline reports, 4 hazardous materials reports, and 7 other studies and special reports.

The Board is seeking authorized resource levels sufficient to fund 399 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in fiscal year 2007 and 475 FTEs in both fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

Member Hersman Speaks at Aviation Safety Seminar

On May 10, Member Debbie Hersman addressed more than 400 aviation professionals at the 51st annual Corporate Aviation Safety Seminar in Phoenix, Arizona. She presented an update on the Board's investigation of several recent high-profile aviation accidents, including those at Montrose, Colorado, and Stuart, Virginia. The Flight Safety Foundation and the National Business Aviation Association jointly sponsored the event.

Member Engleman Conners Addresses SAE Session



The Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) convened a panel on rollover crashworthiness in Washington, DC, on May 9, at which Member Ellen Engleman Conners discussed occupant protection, highlighting the importance of technical and structural improvements in reducing deaths on the Nation's highways. Member Conners cited the Board's investigation of a 2002 Largo, Maryland, highway accident, in which a Ford Explorer Sport, traveling at 70 to 75 mph, veered off the roadway, crossed over the median, climbed up a guardrail, flipped over, and landed on top of a Ford Windstar minivan. She used the results of this accident investigation to stress the need for expanding current evaluation of technology, such as electronic stability control systems, to assist drivers in maintaining control of their vehicles.

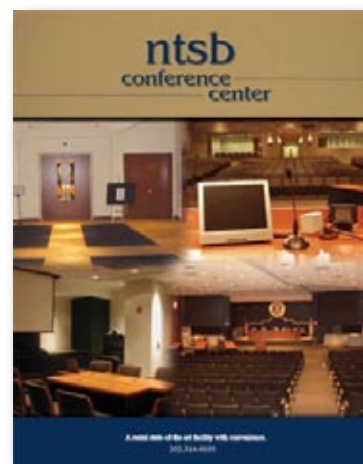
Member Higgins Speaks to Boating Administrators



When the Western States Boating Administrators Association gathered in Kauai, Hawaii, for its annual conference, Member Kitty Higgins opened the meeting and took part in sessions on May 14 and 15, 2006. During her remarks, she updated attendees on the States' progress in implementing marine safety recommendations on the Board's Most Wanted list. Taking part in the conference were representatives from 10 States, 2 Territories, and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as associate members from groups such as the American Watercraft Association, BoatEd Incorporated, and Kawasaki.

Marketing Effort Targets Training and Conference Facilities

The Safety Board has launched a campaign to market its conference and training facilities at the NTSB Academy in Ashburn, Virginia, (near Dulles airport) and at headquarters in Washington, DC, for use by other organizations. The goal of the initiative is to utilize these assets more efficiently while generating revenue to offset operating costs. Staff members have prepared and are mailing a full-color marketing package to potential users.



Have a safe and happy Memorial Day weekend.